



Commandant's NOTE

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INFANTRY DOCTRINE—WHAT SHOULD IT BE?

Here at the Infantry School, one of our most important missions is to keep the field supplied with accurate, up-to-date doctrinal publications. I would like to discuss briefly the meaning of the term *doctrine* and some implications for the design and development of doctrinal literature.

The word literally means "teaching" or "instruction," or "something that is taught." But it can also be defined as a principle or a body of principles that is taught, believed, or advocated. Although the Army Dictionary of Terms seems to say that the word *doctrine* is used only in the latter sense—an authoritative fundamental principle which is used to guide the actions of military forces—the actual usage of the word in the Army does not appear to be that precise. For example, doctrinal publications use a variety of nearly synonymous terms such as *principles, concepts, imperatives, fundamentals, and tenets*, along with equally synonymous terms such as *tactics, techniques, methods, procedures, and skills*.

What, then, should be included in doctrinal publications? The answer to this question cannot be obtained without first examining the target audience for each publication. Infantry doctrinal publications try to address the needs of every echelon, from the squad leader to the brigade commander and everything in between. Each publication, however, focuses on a specific organizational level and is vertically integrated two echelons above and below that level. These publications must address a number of organizations that have different capabilities and limitations (yet with increasing similarities the lower the echelon), and they must serve the needs of the total Army, not just active duty units.

Doctrinal manuals are also used extensively by instructors at all service schools, in the field by ROTC instructor groups and readiness and mobilization regions, and by all the non-infantry units that are required to perform infantry tasks for their own security. In addition, infan-

try doctrinal manuals are frequently used by other branches of the Army and by other services to understand the employment of maneuver units as well as their capabilities, limitations, and support considerations.

The primary purpose of core doctrinal publications (platoon, company, battalion, brigade) should be to facilitate problem-solving for the leader at each of these levels. This purpose can be accomplished in many ways, but it should focus primarily on the codification of principles and concepts. This does not necessarily imply stovepiping the same concepts from echelons above corps down to fire-team level. For example, there are fundamental principles for employing a field army, and there are fundamental principles for employing a squad. To a higher level commander, the "doctrine" or principles for employing a squad or team may seem like only so many techniques or standing operating procedures (SOPs), but in the eyes of the platoon or squad leader, these techniques or SOPs are the very things on which he needs to train his soldiers.

Doctrinal publications should also address the capabilities and limitations of a unit and the employment considerations that will help a leader solve problems through his analysis of METT-T. This provides him with a framework and the basic knowledge that he must have before entering the problem-solving process.

Another key function of doctrinal publications is standardization. Standard procedures, especially activities like staff procedures and drills, improve interoperability and ultimately facilitate synchronization on the battlefield. Standardization also makes it easier for a leader to move on to the problem-solving mode by eliminating many of the low-level problems. It solves questions such as where items of equipment on the TOE go and what function the TOE designer intended for them.

The standardization of procedures for gaining and employing support is especially critical, and these are

found throughout our doctrinal manuals, which serve as the key source for implementation of many STANAGs (standardization agreements) and other agreements. This kind of standardization certainly improves the flexibility and interchangeability of maneuver units on the battlefield.

Maneuver doctrinal manuals must offer a careful balance between theory and application (the "how-to"). The "how-to" of tactics, techniques, and procedures must represent the best ways of doing things. They must stem from lessons learned both from history and from recent combat action. In this sense, doctrinal manuals preserve the lessons learned and prevent a sometimes painful relearning process later. "Cookie cutter" solutions must be stringently avoided, however, because the intent is to foster a problem-solving approach.

The content of doctrinal manuals is also affected greatly by mobilization considerations. Since National Guard and Army Reserve units have few large-scale training opportunities, they need an emphasis on "how-to" that focuses on proven tactics, techniques, and standardized procedures. This gives them the best opportunity to "do it right the first time" and offers them the best return on their most precious commodity—time.

Our doctrinal manuals also serve as textbooks and reference works in the school and in the field. The link between the manuals and the mission training plan is especially critical; the base doctrinal manual serves as the point of departure for the mission training plan, which tells the commander how to train his unit to accomplish his doctrinal missions successfully.

When and how is new doctrine developed? In theory, doctrine should guide the development of force structure and new equipment. Often, however, it is developed or revised when doctrinal voids are discovered, technology outdates doctrine, deficiencies are identified, capstone manuals are revised, or the force structure changes.

The present doctrinal development process is governed by TRADOC Regulation 11-7, which is now being revised. The Infantry School develops and fields all infantry doctrine from the individual soldier level through the brigade level. The school shares with the Armor School proponentcy for heavy force doctrine from company through brigade. It also produces some environmental manuals.

The actual development of a doctrinal manual goes through three phases—research and writing, staffing, and approval. A manual is written in progressive stages—outline, preliminary draft, coordinating draft, and final draft. The outline and the preliminary draft undergo comprehensive reviews through internal staffing, and the coordinating draft is staffed externally with other TRADOC schools and field units. The comments made are incorporated into the final draft and, once approved, this draft is considered doctrinally correct and ready for publication.

The field review of doctrinal publications is one of the most important parts of this process. The quality of USAIS doctrinal literature is dependent upon disciplined, effective review by the field. A number of proposals have been made recently to increase field participation in the validation process, including the application of the doctrine by maneuver units in field exercises before its publication.

I expect an increase in the review and revision of doctrinal manuals as we move forward in the development of the new Joint Readiness Training Center. The center will evaluate a light unit's ability to apply doctrine in the field, as the National Training Center has done with heavy forces. Already, this relationship at the NTC has had a dramatic effect, in the sense not only that doctrine has vastly improved, but also that more commanders and staffs are now reading and studying doctrine.

As the Chief of Infantry, I am committed to providing the field with the best available infantry doctrinal publications, and units in the field have an important role to play in that process. My intent is to reduce the amount of literature published in terms of both bulk and number of publications, yet simultaneously to increase its relevance, timeliness, and readability. In this regard, units in the field may look forward to the consolidation of the many low-echelon infantry publications in the near future. This is in consonance with the fact that we are one infantry; although we may arrive on the battlefield by various means, once there, our missions are relatively the same.

Your role in the field as validator, and ultimately as recipient and executor of infantry doctrine, is critical. I look forward to working with you in the future with the goal of producing the best possible doctrine for our infantrymen.

